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SPEECH

OF THE

HON. J. A. CHAPLEAU.

DELIVERED AT

ST. LAURENT, COUNTY OF JACQUES CARTIER,

ON THE

6th SEPTEMBER, 1883.

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The first thing which has struck as strange and which may well surprise us all who are here to-day, is the aureole which surrounds the Conservative who has come forward in this county as the opponent to the Hon. Prime Minister. I said aureole—I should rather have said rainbow, and the rainbow implies fair weather for poor mortals like Hon. Mr. Mousseau, for among the men of various shades of opinion that compose it, there are reds and blues and greens and yellows, not to speak of other tints. [Laughter.] There are reds (rouges) like Mr. Laflamme, blues like Mr. Bellerose, yellows like—(well it is a Roman color which might have pertained to Mr. Trudel before he quarrelled with the Vatican.) [Cheers.] There are *cailles* like Mr. Beaubien, and *bigarres* like Mr. Mercier, and greens like Mr. Descarries. What a group! And their notes, they are as varied as their plumage. What a happy family. Gentlemen, some of you have a good memory. You can recall the letter that Mr. Laflamme wrote at the last election in the county? What attitude did Mr. Mercier assume at that time? What figure did Mr. Descarries cut? How, then, has this strange revolution come about of which we see the effects? Does Mr. Trudel talk religion with the ex-Minister of Justice or does the latter ask for explanations on the conugal Syllabus? Does Mr. Mercier speak of coalition with Mr. Bellerose? No, but Mr. Bellerose tells

the story of his late electoral mission to St. Hyacinthe. And Mr. Beaubien hears all that is going and—turns it to his own advantage, while he thinks of his lost speaker's chair for which he has found a substitute at Lavigne's. Rather look at that dreamy brow:—

Oh ! qui me donnera d'y sonder sa pensee
Lorsque le souvenir de sa grandeur passee,
Revient comme un remords l'assaillir loin du
bruit.

[Cheers.] Why are they here, those friends of yesterday, those foes of tomorrow? Mr. Mousseau has not changed. He is the same Premier, with the same Government, with the same programme. Mr. Descarries, too, is the same that he ever was. He has learned nothing new; he had nothing to forget. If the two candidates have not changed, who or what has produced the change in those who said 'yes' yesterday and came to say 'no' to-day? This is the answer to the riddle—and it is as old as the story of disappointed politicians. It is because Mr. Trudel is not a judge, in spite of his solicitation of Mr. Dansereau; it is because Mr. Mercier is not a Minister, although he asked Mr. Mousseau to appoint him; it is because Mr. Beaubien is not Speaker, although he asked—all the echoes around him; because Mr. Laflamme is not a member, and he wants his next cant didature puffed up; because Mr. Bellerose—no, he has not changed—he is what he always was, tiresome and dis-

agreeable. [Cheers.] Do you think those gentlemen care about the candidate that they have presented to you? Not the least in the world. Do you think they care about the electors? Not much! But, to come to the point, whether they have changed through interest or not, in good earnest or make-believe, for good reason or none at all, would that be sufficient to make you, free and honest electors, turn round like whirligigs? Are you going to be two-faced because those gentlemen have their spites to gratify? They must, indeed, have a small opinion of you if they think they can thus play at shuttlecock with the county. A Liberal said the other day that if Mr. Mercier took them for playthings, he must try his game elsewhere. That might do at St. Hyacinthe, but it would not do here. [Cheers.] You have heard all those gentlemen. Have they given you a single solid reason for voting against the Hon. Mr. Mousseau? Not one. Their speeches were full of insults to me and to Mr. Senecal, but apart from that there was nothing in them. And they have made all this noise and fuss to induce you to vote for a man whom they do not like or respect themselves, and whom they would still have you accept as the man of your taste and choice, the man whom you would select to maintain the high reputation of your country. Ah! gentlemen, you shall do what seems right to you, and I will be nothing the poorer afterwards; but, frankly and with all the esteem and respect that I have for you, I would think very little of you indeed if you lent yourselves to a dirty game like that. [Cheers.] You know that I never decline nor dislike a struggle, but what I like is a frank, sincere, in fact, a square fight. I respect my opponents when they engage in those struggles, but low comedy like that, fie, it is simply disgusting.

ACCUSATIONS FOR REASONS.

And what have they told you to make you accept their mannikin? That I was rich, that I had millions (ah! if I had, I would lend some of them to purchase another candidate than that one), that I had enriched myself at the expense of the province. And who said so? Mr. Lafamme, the man of the canal; Mr. Mercier, the man of the tunnel; Mr. Bellerose, the man who sold his parliamentary stationery: Mr. Trudel, who

would have bartered his seat as a senator for a judgeship in the Northwest, and finally Mr. Beaubien, who paid by building lots for the tracing which brought the railroad on to his farm, who sold to Mr. Senecal for the Government the land surrounding the station at Mile End at three times the price of the land adjoining his, who caused to be built the railway to the exhibition grounds, in order to add value to his property, who procured at the cost of the Government a Speaker's chair, costing \$120, under the pretext that the old one had been soiled by Mr. Turcotte. At least, these small gentry should put in their attacks a little of the form that good electoral traditions have left us, but no:

"Vile intriguer, liar, speculator, robber, trafficker in principles, shameless jobber, slave, manipulator of consciences, chief of the band of brigands, vampires, stealer of letters, Freemasons, friend of cut-throats and assassins, friend of gaoi-birds, hypocrite, plunderer, thief."

That is a collection of mild terms which the journal of Mr. Senator Trudel has applied to me in the thirty or forty numbers that I went over yesterday. Surely it is not in the Senate that he learned that vocabulary; nor, perhaps, was it during his trip to Paris, for I am sure that he was better behaved than that at the *Folies Bergeres*. Could he, by chance, like the innocent *Vert-Vert*, have made the passage in bad company? Guess, if you can [Laughter and cheers]. For my part I know nothing about it, nor do I wish to know; I only know one thing, and you will agree with me that a stock like that could not come out of very clean shop. *Le Temps* (that ball that Mr. Mercier has tied to his foot), *Le Temps* is too young yet to have learned these words. It is too small, and its month is not large enough; but that will come in good time, I suppose. Here is a sample:—

"That other windbag, who is called Secretary of State, has never frightened anyone. Besides a pleasant physique and sympathetic voice, he has nothing that would make of him even an ordinary orator. The proprieties of grammar, even of good sense, were never worse treated by the lowest huckster than by that political charlatan whose only merit consists in resounding like a big drum and having the cap sent round among the crowd to have his own throat filled. The sale of the railroad is the proof of it."

Such is the politeness, the justice of my opponents. How pleasant it is to carry on a contest with such men! I have been a

member for sixteen years, and I think I have sat in the House with many men of good sense; I have been a minister for eight years, I have been Premier nearly three years, and I may be allowed to say that I did my duty in the different important positions that I have occupied. The world, therefore must be composed of fools, if the great editor of *Le Temps* is a man of wit, or *vice versa*; I believe that it is *vice versa*. (Cheers.) I think there are still people of wit, and I am sure that there is at least one fool in *Le Temps*, and he runs the risk of being one as long as he lives. (Loud cheers.) It is enough that he has made "errors of judgment;" that cannot be for want of language. Let the earth of Notre Dame des Anges be light over him. Well, gentlemen, it is funny in one sense, but it is sad in another; it is melancholy when we think that it is with such language that they attempt to instruct the people. When we read the history of rebellions, and are indignant when we see the drunkard publish edicts against honest people, we might ask ourselves if it was not in such abandoned sheets as *L'Etendard* that the lesson of producing such papers as *Le Pere Du Chene*, and that is what they call engaging in politics.

THE QUESTION OF POLITICS.

But what, then, do you mean by politics? Until the present, I thought that it meant the knowledge of men and things, applied to the administration of public affairs; I thought that it was the art of instructing the people and guiding them towards their destinies in the world. Was I deceived? Am I then a simpleton? It is true that I was quite young when I learned the elements of politics; I loved politics before I knew the tortuous paths of self-interest, of ambition and of intrigue. I studied politics before I studied the narrow meanness or the calculated effrontery that is too often mixed with it. Yes, politics had my first affections, and I have kept for them the freshness of remembrance which time has not yet effaced. It is perhaps a fault in my political education; it is doubtless a weakness from the standpoint of success, but I confess to you that I do not regret that fault, and that I do not wish to cure myself of that weakness. From the first, from the earliest days of my career, I have loved frankness, openness and friendship in politics. I have

not changed nor would I change my temperament in that respect. I left college; I had in the history of the country learned that our ancestors by blood were of a race of whom it was said with justice, "*Gesta dei der francos*"; that God had made use of them for his work, and for adopted ancestors men who had carried over all seas the glory of their name and had planted in all continents the fertile seed of liberty (cheers). I then believed that the Canadian people, combined of greatness, of devotion, of freedom, and of pride, was worth the trouble of loving and of instructing, of keeping it great and vigorous, and of taking care not to deceive, to spoil or to vilify it. (Cheers.) That is the reason why, from the first day that I addressed my fellow-citizens to the present moment when I address you, I have had no other rule than this: to have the right of telling the people what are their duties, we must first respect them; to command them we must love them; to have their confidence, we must be courageous, and frank and open-minded, and I am not afraid to appeal to all those who know and who have heard me for the last twenty years. I appeal to you, gentlemen, who hear me now; the people, the real people, not those whom they gain over by bribery and treating, the people have always heard me, even when they have not followed me. I may have been mistaken myself, I must have been mistaken sometimes (who is there who has never been mistaken), but I have the satisfaction of saying that it has not been by calculation, and I know that my good faith has been credited. [Cheers.] That is the reason I have never failed; that is the reason that disgust has never so far got hold of me as to make me abandon my task, although few men have had so many struggles to sustain, hatreds to brave, and so much drivel to put up with on the part of their opponents. I have always said to myself that the country which I loved is well worth the trouble that I undergo in its service. Often I have returned from these contests soiled, wounded, bruised, but never broken. What matter. It is not to uniforms that are stainless, that have no mark of dust or blood, that have never been torn, that the Cross of Honor is attached. It is not as a mere soldier of parade that I have gained my stripes, and if I have kept my wounds I have also kept my flag, and I am not dead yet. [Cheers]. Some months ago some persons said

I was dying ; they tolled the bell for me with an air of joy badly disguised ; they were preparing my funeral speech and beginning to sing sweet things of me, believing all was over. But I have returned to life, and since then they are more opposed to me than ever ; they would bury me alive ; they would bury me with mud, dirt, hatred and calumny. I did not know that my enemies had so much that was unclean in their souls, so much gall in their hearts, so much venom in their pens, but they have not buried me, nor will they bury me. I am better than ever I was, and I have come here in the midst of these people whom I love to continue my task, to render you a service. That task we shall accomplish together, and with your support we shall bring to a victorious, a triumphant conclusion. [Loud cheers.] To us be the work, to all be the glory and the good results. It is to St. Laurent that I wished to come ; first, to the County of Jacques Cartier, whose name sounds so well to courageous souls. [Cheers.] It is a long time since we first met here on the ground of politics ; seventeen years, I believe, since that day of trial. The other day we met on the grounds of the dead ; I came to mingle my regrets with yours at the tomb of the companion of one of your old servants, your ancient member. It is in the days of mourning that we count our true friends. To-day is a day of labor, and I have come to you again. To-day is a great anniversary—the 6th of September—the anniversary of the birth of Sir George Cartier, that great patriot who died in the service of his country ; died regretting that he was far away from the Canadian people whom he had loved so very much. Him they had calumniated during his life, but he had the tardy justice rendered him after death of being called a great citizen. Such a day is a good augury ; such a day cannot but be one of success, the forerunner of a triumph. [Cheers.] Ah, my noble friend, if you were here you would say to those assembled, eager to know and to do what is right, to these people here gathered together, that those are not worthy of public confidence who seek to villify the representatives of the nation and stain the reputation of their compatriots ; they are unworthy of you, whose just song, as well as last sigh, were those words so patriotic, “Before all, let us be Canadians.” [Loud cheers.] Gentlemen,

I told you what kind of men my opponents were—envious, disappointed, ambitious, who regarded hatred as talents. It is no longer, as formerly, a loyal struggle of parties ; it is a monstrous combination of elements most opposed to each other—*Le Temps* and *L'Etendard*, in a word,

THE CASTORS.

What is a castor ? Does it refer to that intelligent and industrious animal which, along with the maple leaf, serves us as a national emblem ? No, our political opponents are not patriots enough for that. [Laughter and cheers.] What, then, is a castor ? City workmen call castors those who pretend to know a great deal and who cannot do very much—the talkers, the parasites of trade. [Cheers.] In the country they also call castors those little black creatures who live in ponds on the surface of the stagnant water and spread an odor that is not agreeable—the water bugs, in fact. [Cheers.] Are they the types of the *Etendard* tribe. The political castors are a little of all that, and something worse still. Their party comprises all the ambitious mediocrities who cannot succeed by ordinary means ; all the disappointed and a good number of the hypocrites who pretend to be religious and call themselves Conservative, so as more easily to ruin the great Conservative party, so as the more easily to destroy in the minds of the people the true sentiment of religion, whose fundamental principle is respect for authority and love for one's neighbor. They have, besides, the mark of resemblance with the real beaver ; they do their work with mud, they destroy the ramparts of good mills to construct their dams and are only really useful when they have lost their skins. [Cheers.] The opposition which those men make to us is not of any importance were it not for the character which they have given, to what they call their mission. They have cloaked themselves with the mantle of religion, and with that false pretence they have imposed on a number of honest people whose minds it is difficult to disburse.

THE POLITICO-RELIGIOUS PRESS.

A singular disease has made its appearance in our country within the last few years. As soon as a young man has read ten pages of Veillot or Joseph De Maistre, as soon as he has written two or three letters to a *Ouré* and an article in the press, he begins to be-

lieve that he has a mission and constitutes himself an apostle, and must without delay enter on a crusade. Now, as the heathen and enemies of the Faith are far-off, and his projectiles, not being of long range, are apt to fall in the vicinity, if a charitable neighbor brings back one of them with the remark that it had missed its aim, and that the pagans were considerably beyond where it fell, our young man seeks a quarrel with his neighbor and accuses him of temporising with the enemy and betraying the great interests of religion. He will accept of no explanation, hear no reply. In his eyes, you bear the impression of the fatal seal. Thus truly it is that there has started into existence amongst us what is known as the politico-religious press, a press without authorization, malevolent, which has done more harm than many of the professed foes of religion, by offending and dividing men's consciences through exclusiveness, and by posing as the sole defender of doctrine and of the Church. There are two things as to which, in the Province of Quebec, no government need dread attack—the French-Canadian nationality and the Catholic religion. In these strongholds there is too much innate force, too much unity of sentiment in the population to make any conflict on those points possible. (Cheers) Look at the Liberal Governments after issuing from the struggle of the last thirty years. In spite of their denunciations in the press and on the hustings when they were in opposition, in spite of the free-thought notions blazoned abroad by their most powerful friends, you see them docile and obedient when religious questions are brought up. It is not from sympathy or from taste that they act thus; it is because it is their interest to do so; it is because they know that the immense majority of our people are profoundly and sincerely Catholic. And, moreover, if any danger arose, have we not vigilant sentinels, experienced leaders, to point it out to us and to guide us in the defence. The episcopate in our country, as elsewhere, has always shown a zeal worthy of its lofty mission, an admirable prudence, a constant vigilance, with a moderation and tact which have won for its members the immense respect with which all the Powers have surrounded it, and the astonishing success which has crowned its efforts. With the vast influence which the Episcopate has at its disposal, with the whole body

of the clergy, there is no reason to fear for the liberty of the Church. It is, therefore, mere temerity to interfere, without special authority, in discussions in which the slightest mistake may compromise the entire cause, or the least display of petulance may provoke grave divisions, such as those of which our Province has, unhappily, been the victim for several years. Yet, notwithstanding those rude lessons of experience, a certain number of young men seem to take pleasure in starting anew those sad conflicts. It is quite time that a reaction should take place in public opinion, before the evil becomes more general. Unhappily, the evil is most intense at the very source from which its cure ought to be derived. That which the Episcopate deplores a portion of the clergy countenances and encourages. It has been stated that the majority of the shareholders, or, if you will, the active patrons of *L'Etendard*, is composed of members of the clergy. To that we have nothing to reply, but we flatter ourselves that we know enough of the disposition of our clergy to be assured that they would at once rebuke any one who would thus address them: "I propose to make use of your money and your influence in order to unite our efforts with those of Mr. Mercier and the Liberals with the object of overthrowing the Conservative Government of Quebec and of dividing that of Ottawa." Evidently, when Mr. Trudel took it into his head to found a journal, he took care to produce a thrill on the religious chord, and it was not in the name of politics that he appealed to the clergy. He gave a front place to certain great principles. He dwelt on the importance of intensely Catholic minds having a trustworthy organ of their own. And the prospectus number of *L'Etendard* may be taken as evidence of the fact. From this point of view the letter of Mr. Prendergast to Mr. Mackay has a great importance; it gives the note which has been sounded over and over again. This letter bears the date of the 22nd of August, 1882, that is to say, in the very travail of creation. Shareholders were then in demand, and Mr. Prendergast, who asks Mr. Mackay for money to found a paper in Montreal, styles himself in *L'Etendard*, "Prendergast et Cie., éditeurs et propriétaires." There is, accordingly, no room for doubt; it is the present directorate of *L'Etendard* that furnished to its public the

reasons and motives for which the latter was to give money to Messrs. Trudel and Prendergast. The reasons are as follows :—

"For a certain number of years the Catholic clergy, and in general the Catholics of the Province of Quebec, have felt profoundly the want of a daily journal which should have for its chief object the promotion of Catholic interests. The pretended Catholic journals now in existence are invariably devoted, in the first place, to their political parties, and, after that, to personal interests. The natural consequence is that when it becomes necessary to instruct the population on important religious and political questions, the daily journals now in existence often refuse to do so, on the ground that such a course would injure the interests of party or come in conflict with personal opinions. Thus in 1877, at the time of the Orange troubles, we saw the Protestant press forming a coalition against us, while the pretended Catholic journals treated the question from a political point of view and according to party interests.

"I have just cited only a single instance, but there are several others where an independent Catholic journal could have rendered eminent services.

"Urged by this necessity, which has been long felt, supported by numerous friends among the clergy, and, moreover, acting in conformity with the desire clearly expressed by Pius the Ninth and Leo the Thirteenth, that the press should insist upon and defend the rights of the Church, a group of distinguished Catholics are now endeavoring to raise a subscription for the foundation of a journal devoted to Catholic interests and absolutely independent of party or personal interests. To realize the project a capital of \$100,000 would be necessary, and our friends are far from being rich."

In the words just quoted the case is well put, and in order that there might be no doubt, *L'Estandard* of the 13th of August endorses the above letter by saying :—

"There is but one expression as to the value of the letter: 'That's just the thing.' 'It is the pure and simple truth.' 'It is exactly what we would have written ourselves.' Mr. Prendergast has admirably summed up what the public thinks and feels on the matter. * * Who would venture to deny that the letter in question is only a translation of the whole independent Conservative press, at the time when it was written?"

Before examining the consequences of such an appeal, let us examine the facts. Do the Catholics of the Province of Quebec experience the want of a daily journal? [No, no.] The Episcopate answered the question in a letter addressed to the clergy of the diocese of St. Hyacinthe, denouncing the idea of founding a religious journal. This important document informed us that the Bishop of the diocese in which the future journal was to be published was himself far from desiring it.

Mr. Prendergast is particularly unfortunate in the example that he cites of the affair of the Orangemen. A positive man who wished to have a brief characterization of that assertion would be forced to cry out, "That is a lie of the first water." Who does not know that the two great Conservative organs, *La Minerve* and *Le Monde*, were inflexible on the Orange question? They even quarreled with their comrade in arms, the *GAZETTE* of Montreal; they gave their approval and encouragement to Mayor Beaudry, and, in fact, put themselves at the head of the movement which presented the demonstration. The *Minerve* never inquired whether it was striking friends or foes in politics. It struck right and left. [Hear, hear.] On the other hand is it not pitiable to find a public man, a Senator like Mr. Trudel, thus coolly and deliberately, in the hope of carrying an election, making appeals to the prejudices of race and religion. Now what are

THE CONSEQUENCES OF A PROPAGANDA

based on the letter of Mr. Prendergast? What figure would Mr. Mackay have cut if he had spent a hundred thousand dollars to start *L'Estandard* as a religious journal? What has come of that want of an organ on the part of the Catholics? We never heard *L'Estandard* address a word of rebuke to *La Patrie*, to the *Witness*, or to *L'Aurore*. But, on the other hand, we read ten times over in the same number that there is a clique in the Province of Quebec, that Mr. Mousseau is to disappear, and that Messrs. Senecal and Dansereau must be chased from the Conservative party. The religion of *L'Estandard* does not proceed from that direction. It is true that Messrs. Mousseau and Dansereau are not merely professed, but fervently Catholic. It is true that Mr. Mousseau wrote, not six months since, a magnificent profession of faith addressed to the bishops. It is true that Mr. Senecal, who considers himself a submissive son of the Church, has his share, both with heart and purse, in all the good works which he was invited to assist. It is true that all those gentlemen are without reproach both as to their doctrines and their intentions. But what does all that signify? *L'Estandard* can say, no doubt, that it is doing the work of the Church in combating Catholics of that stamp, to the benefit of unbelievers and fanatics whom it lets alone. It is true that public opinion was aroused to overthrow

those pretenders. (Cheers.) There is no kind of axe-grinding worse than the religious variety. (Hear, hear.) No one has the right to turn to his own personal ends that grand and powerful sentiment which dominates us in this fair land of Canada. In a country where there are so many honest-minded men, so many sincere Catholics, so many disciples of truth and justice, it is easy to gather partisans to one's side in the name of religion. But woe to him who makes of religion a ladder to mount to regions that are alien to it. (Cheers.) Grafted on a religious stock, *L'Etendard* has received from

A PORTION OF THE CLERGY

an encouragement of which it has shown itself little worthy. The thought of its patrons and sponsors was that it should give the tone to the Canadian press by dignity of language, loftiness of aim and impartiality of judgment. What must be the disappointment of those who in good faith believed in the protests that were made to them. I know that everywhere the direction which that journal has taken is matter for regret. But the evil is done, and those who condemn it to-day are aware of the enormous responsibility which they assumed. The blunder which a portion of the clergy committed (and undoubtedly it was a blunder) was, not in having interested themselves in politics—that was their right; nor in having given their opinions on public questions related to morality and to religion—that was their duty—but, gentlemen, your fault was to have given politicians admission to that fortress of society into which faith, charity and virtue alone should gain admittance. [Cheers.] The fault was to have allowed a few men—some of them of greater conviction than ambition, others of more ambition than sincerity—to have you for their partners, for their sureties, their defenders, to take refuge in your sacred ark, to hide their own weakness and avoid disaster. In fine, the fault was that you intervened to receive the blows which they drew upon themselves by their temerity. Beware, for those who would have you make that mistake have their personal interest in your doing so, and to that interest they were not afraid to sacrifice religion and the Church. Insinuating and skilful, they flatter you, telling you that you alone know the real

needs of the people. Yes, and it is just because you know those needs so well that you should take care not to let yourselves serve the purposes of those who have no thought for the people at all. You represent devotion, abnegation, self-sacrifice, charity; those who would make use of you are far from representing those virtues in the eyes of the people. Do not, then, imprudently allow yourselves to shield their cause with your name, your mission and your character. (Cheers.)

FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

That is what I think; that is what I meant. An attempt has been made to ruin me in the mind of the clergy, and I know that my opponents have succeeded in creating enemies for me. Calumny has always a certain degree of success. I am aware that from presbytere to presbytere, from palace to palace, they have carried the miserable joke that, during my travels in France, I was affiliated with the Freemasons. My name, it was reported, had been seen on the registers of the Grand Orient. Even the name of the person who gave this piece of information was mentioned. And the one selected could not fail to carry conviction, for it was that of Mr. Claudio Jannet, one of the most illustrious Catholic writers in France. It was from him that the story had come! Yes, gentlemen of the clergy, who will read these words, you know that such things have been said of me. But, perhaps, you do not know that it was those politicians who assume to themselves especially the character of religion who invented those calumnies which priests and even bishops have repeated. I never cared to answer in public those perfidious lies which were whispered about with an air of sympathetic pity for myself. I do not reply for the same reason that I had no need of a certificate to prove that I am a French-Canadian and a Catholic. Besides, the cowardly calumny which hides itself is not worthy of the honor of a public reply. I have done better. On my passing through France I wrote the following letter to Mr. Claudio Jannet, whom I had known in Canada, and whom I knew too well to believe that he could have written such an infamy. Here are my letter and his reply:—

“PARIS, 10th October, 1882.

“M. CLAUDIO JANNET.

“MY DEAR SIR,—The relations, unfortunately too brief, which we have had together

in Canada, were of a character to justify me, I am sure, in the request I am about to make of you. For a ready a sufficiently long time in Canada, some persons have made use of your name to support an odious calumny against me. In a word, it has been secretly circulated in the ranks of the clergy that I was either a member or affiliated with a Free-Masonic or some other secret society in France. And they make use of your name to support these false statements by adding that it is Mr. Claudio Jannet, of Paris, who furnished the proof of this statement, he stating, after having assured himself of the fact, that the Hon. First Minister of the Province of Quebec was a registered member of the Grand Orient.

Under the circumstances, I am sure you will not consider improper the request which I make that you would state, if the persons who are making use of your name in the manner above indicated stated the truth, or if the story was an invention on their part. Pardon me, my dear sir, this application, which is dictated simply by a desire to preserve your esteem, and to not lose that of my Catholic compatriots in Canada.

"Accept, dear sir, the expression of my high consideration, and believe me,

"Your obedient servant,
(Signed) "J. A. CHAPLEAU."

"FONT DE L'ARC,
"Aix en Provence, }
"12th October, 1882. }

"DEAR SIR—I regret much that my sojourn in the country deprived me of the honour of receiving your visit at Paris.

"I am extremely surprised that my name has been mixed up with the allegations you speak of. I have never said nor written to anyone that you belonged either to Free Masonry, or to any secret society whatever.

"Not only do I authorize you, but I pray you, if need be, to give to this denial all the publicity that you may consider proper.

"Accept, dear sir, the expression of my most distinguished consideration, and believe me always,

"Your most devoted servant,
(Signed) "CLAUDIO JANNET."

And on the occasion of my visit to Rome, I transmitted a memorandum to the Propaganda, containing a complaint against my detractors, and concluding in these words:—

"Before concluding, I desire to make the following declaration to your Eminence:—On the honour of a gentleman, on the faith of a Christian and a devoted Catholic, I declare that I am not, and that I have never been, a Freemason, or a member of any secret society; I have never had the desire nor the intention to become one, and I have frequently in my young days refused to become a member of such societies.

"It remains for me only to declare my entire devotion to our Holy Mother, the Church, and my profound consideration for your Eminence, and with pleasure I subscribe myself,

"Your Eminence's most humble and
"devoted servant,
(Signed) "J. A. CHAPLEAU."

"Distrust those who would protect you in spite of yourself," said a diplomat, "as such persons are sure to bring you into trouble." It is a wise counsel, which is not without its application to present circumstances.

THE QUESTION OF UNDUE INFLUENCE.

The gravest charge that they have brought against me before the clergy is that of having refused, when I was Prime Minister, to present a measure on the subject of what it has been agreed to call undue influence—that is, a measure interdicting the civil tribunals from inquiring into the intervention of the clergy in elections. It is true, I refused to do so, and on that subject I have never changed my opinion. I gave at length and in detail the reasons for my refusal to the religious authorities and, far from disapproving, I received from the Holy See a testimony of consideration which I shall cherish as long as I live as an inestimable treasure. [Cheers] I refused because in a mixed community like ours such legislation would have been a germ of discord which statesmen should endeavor to avoid. It has been pretended that the Protestants of the Province of Quebec would have accepted that legislation. I know the contrary, but even if I had not known it, I would not have run the risk of raising a controversy so dangerous. I always thought that the priest should abstain from interfering, as a priest, in contests purely political. He has every possible right to express his personal sympathies, and even to give advice. If he goes beyond that he must take, like other citizens, the responsibility and risk of his acts and his words. I believe that on that question I am in the right, and whatever may be the struggle with which I am threatened, I will not change my views. [Cheers]

THE RAILWAY AND THE ROLE OF ACCUSERS.

I come now to the question of the sale of the Government railway. Since the day I left Quebec to accept a portfolio in the Government of Canada, people have again raised this question for the purpose of using it against the present local Government. We have seen persons who have always approved of the sale of the railway join themselves suddenly with the adversaries of the Government and become the most ardent accusers of those whose acts they had approved and sustained; we have seen the old

friends of the political leaders becoming the insulters of those whose views they had before always shared. I will say to our contradicitors: You say that the railroad was sold at a price far too low, and you pretend to prove it by demonstrating that it was resold for a much higher price.

HOW THE RAILWAY WAS SOLD.

Allow me first to tell you that this question has been discussed at length and has been decided by the Legislature. It is simply an idle waste of time to go over it all again. Nevertheless, since you desire it, I will resume it once more, and, in fact, two words will suffice to clear the matter up. [Hear, hear.] The price of the sale was frankly, publicly announced by the Government itself at the time of the general elections of December, 1881. I had made the question the first article in my electoral programme. I did not think that public tenders were necessary. On this point I had consulted the most competent authority that I could find in the Province, Mr. Shanly. This is his reply:—

"MONTREAL, 27th December, 1881.

"Hon. J. A. Chapleau, Premier, &c., Quebec,—

"DEAR SIR,—In response to a question you recently asked me, I am firmly of the belief that in seeking to lease or sell the Government railway, it will be much the better and safer plan to negotiate privately, so to speak, with parties of known eligibility as lessees or purchasers, rather than put up the property to public tender. The public tender plan was tried in 1875, and with decidedly unsatisfactory results.

"A variety of offers were received, and of varying characteristics in respect to the valuation put upon the property, &c., as to show that many of those desirous of leasing the road could have known little on the subject they were dealing with. A specious appearance was given to some wholly valueless offers by proposing high rates of rent with security for the due performance of the contract, which, when examined, proved to be no security at all. Similar results would be certain to follow an invitation for tenders now or at any time.

"Offers would come in which, however seemingly desirable, you would have to reject. Companies or syndicates financially able to undertake the control and working of the four hundred miles of Government railway are not hastily formed; and the individuals to compose such associations would be likely not to care to enter into competition with all comers.

"One effect then, of putting up the leasing of the line to public competition would be very likely the deterring of the best parties from offering for it at all, and so leave the Government to deal with such parties only

as had responded to their invitation for tenders.

"Having adopted the principle of open competition, the Government could not very well set aside all offers made, and fall back upon private negotiations after all.

"They would naturally be expected to award the lease to some one of the companies that had tendered for it.

"The selection of the parties to whom to entrust the care and working of a property of such immense value as the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa & Occidental Railway for a term of ten, twenty or twenty-five years is a matter for the very gravest consideration, and, in my opinion, the surest way of obtaining full value for the property, either on lease or by sale, is for the Government to determine the minimum value to the province and negotiate on that basis with persons whose ability to undertake and carry out either form of contract is undoubted.

"Yours truly,
"W. SHANLY."

And from the moment when, after the elections, I began to receive regular offers of purchase—I had already had several—I asked Mr. Shanly to put in writing the advice which he had given me, so that it might serve as an official document. Still it has been said and repeated again and again, that it was Mr. Senecal who determined the Government to make the sale, and that I had from the first determined to make it to himself. It is painful, gentlemen, to a man who believes he has sincerely and conscientiously done his duty to be obliged to answer such low insinuations, especially knowing, as I do, that so far from having been favored in this transaction, Mr. Senecal has been the most ill-treated of all, in his negotiations. And yet it was to him, I do not hesitate to say, that the province is indebted for having found so advantageous a way to dispose of its railroad. I hear my opponents say that the bargain could not have been so good a one for us, because in less than a year after Mr. Senecal found a buyer, and profited by his purchase. Wait, gentlemen; I have a word to say on that point presently. But, meantime, I ask permission to say—and I must ask the pardon of the manager of the Grand Trunk for the indiscretion that I am committing—that the Grand Trunk itself had, non-officially and confidentially, made an offer for our railway, and that it did not go beyond six million dollars for the entire road. [Cheers.] There are persons present here to-day who are as well aware of the fact as I am. Let me also tell you that the Pacific Railway Company would not have given more than seven millions for the whole road. [Cheers.] Let

me, above all, tell you that if Mr. Senecal had not made an offer which was methodical and reasoned out in all its details, we could not have met with a single offer exceeding six millions and a half. Let me tell you that the Pacific Railway Company have also said and thought and still say and think [you can ask them if you like] that the Government obtained for this section of the road the full value, if not more. And still every one agreed in saying at that time that the road from Montreal to Ottawa was the only part of the line that was worth anything and would return profits, and that the other section, not being connected with the United States in winter, would hardly pay enough to grease the wheels of the engines and cars. Let me tell you that there is not a man of business, a railroad man of any importance, nor a capitalist, who has not said and would not say again, on his responsibility as a man of business, that the province has had the full value of its property in the fortunate bargains that I have been able to conclude. Let me tell you that the capitalists who were joined with Mr. Senecal in the Syndicate which bought the eastern section had really no confidence in the pecuniary success of their enterprise, and they invested their capital in it, in a great measure, from public spirit and, to some extent, because they believed in the lucky star of the man with whom they were associated. (Cheers.) Do you wish me to cite names? I am not afraid to do so. I will mention the names of Messrs. James Gibb Ross, McGreevy, and Alphonse Desjardins. These men are still alive and can give their opinions. The expression of it is, indeed, contained in a letter I am going to read, the letter of a man whose great business experience cannot be doubted, and who is not likely to be suspected of partiality for Mr. Senecal. On the 3rd of April, 1882, Mr. M. H. Gault wrote to me as follows:—

"MONTREAL, 3rd April, 1882.

"MY DEAR SIR.—Now that the road has been divided, and the most promising portion sold the Canadian Pacific Railway, I am indifferent whether I continue a member or not. Other gentlemen who had joined me in this purchase of the whole road have withdrawn their names, believing there is no money in the purchase of the Eastern portion.

(Signed,) "M. H. GAULT."

"To Hon. J. A. Chapleau."

I regret, gentlemen, to have to enter into

these details from which the respect due to our public men should have saved me. But I promised to leave nothing unanswered and I have accomplished my task, painful though it has been. [Cheers.] But, it may be said, how did the Grand Trunk come to make the purchase of the Eastern section on such conditions? Gentlemen, if there is in this crowd a man clever enough to explain the operations of railways and the principles that rule them in their rivalries, in their wars, in their transactions with one another, I will tell him that his secret is worth millions, if he only turns it to account. Railroads have been known to be sold at two cents in the dollar one year, and in less than three years, be worth twenty times that sum. Who will not acknowledge that the Western section would not have yielded the half of its value, if it had remained in the hands of the Government after the construction of the rival line of the Canada Atlantic? And what of that sale to the Grand Trunk? What are its conditions? What is the margin of chance or hazard that it includes? That sale, if I have been rightly informed, was only based on a guarantee of debentures of the company selling, and of that guarantee, variable, as are all railway funds—and the present time is exceptional for such variations—could the Government assume the risk of it on the transactions in which it was a party? No, you, who are my opponents, know it quite well, and, if you were not actuated by bad faith, you would unite with me in recognizing the facts. [Cheers.] It is so much the better, I say, a thousand times over, if a fellow-citizen, courageous in his enterprises and skilful in his calculations succeeds in making a considerable fortune. I am proud of it, and you ought all to be glad to hear of such a thing. Even if it were a bitter enemy, I would, for my part, still rejoice in his prosperity. In the days of ill fortune, that man shrank from no personal sacrifice to promote the triumph of the good cause. Those who are tearing him in pieces to-day would not have even the temptation of power, if Mr. Senecal had not been to the fore and helped us on to success. So much the better, then, if he has succeeded in his turn. And there is no right-thinking, honest man who does not share in the sentiment. (Cheers.)

THE POLICY OF SELLING THE RAILWAY.

I do not believe there is a single man who

would deliberately and seriously put in question the wisdom of selling the road and of thus relieving the finances of so heavy a burden. It is well known that the leaders of the Conservative party at Ottawa, when consulted on that important act, gave it their ready adhesion. One can only laugh at the absurd pretension of the hair-splitting lawyer who cited articles of the Code to prove that an administration could not sell that which it administered, when it was Parliament that gave its solemn sanction to a contract in which, after all, the administrator was only one of the shareholders. There is no longer any intention of

DISCUSSING THE PRICE.

That is a question which was decided after long deliberation. It was M. Joly's as well as M. Mercier's opinion that \$8,000,000 represented the full value of the railway. Still, I cannot help saying that on the evening of the very day on which Mr. Senecal was to submit his contract to the Government, I made a final effort with Sir John to obtain the acquisition of the road by the Pacific Company. Perhaps I did not observe the ordinary rules of discretion, but it was I who myself dictated the terms on which Mr. Senecal and his syndicate offered to buy the road from us, and with my permission Sir John communicated to the president of the Pacific Company every one of its clauses and the conditions of sale. [Cheers.] I committed an injustice towards those who alone of all the parties tendering had made a methodical study of their own offer. The Allan-Rivard Syndicate never made the slightest calculation as to their tender. If any one reads the official correspondence, he will see that Mr. Rivard only copied out the proposals made to him by the Hon. Mr. Loranger and myself. It was the desire of us both (and that is how that syndicate originated) to effect a fusion of those two groups, and it was only when we saw the equivocal game that Sir Hugh Allan and Mr. Beaubien were playing in the matter that we thought proper to leave them to themselves. After that they were no longer in question, except in the underhand and deceitful intrigues of Mr. Beaubien in the house.

MR. MERCIER'S POSITION.

As for Mr. Mercier, he is obliged to have recourse to ridiculous evasions, saying that

the Government obtained the consent of the House for the sale of the road under false pretences. But is it for Mr. Mercier to speak of such a thing as false pretences after trying to obtain power by giving his tacit approbation to the whole transaction? How, Mr. Mercier, do you expect that sensible people will believe when you tell that absurd story which you imposed on your St. Hyacinthe electors about your determination to attend the House only just as your business would permit? Gentlemen, do you know what Mr. Mercier thinks of those who absent themselves from the Legislature during the Session? He will not deny that in 1878, at a meeting held at St. Liboire in the county of Bagot, he denounced Mr. Mousseau, who had absented himself from the Session of the House of Commons to take part in the Provincial election because "he had misunderstood the obligations of his position by abstaining at the end of the Session from voting on about fifty questions," insisting upon the fact that "when one accepts the representation of a county, he is required, according to the dictates of honor and of his conscience," to represent his county "during the whole of the session, and to vote upon all questions which are submitted to the Legislature." How do you expect to be believed when you, a party leader, excuse yourself in that way for declining to vote on a question of such vital importance to the Province! You know that you would not deserve to be a leader, nor even a member, if your excuse were a sincere one. [Cheers.] Come, now! Be frank! You were for the sale of the eastern as well as the western section of the road. As to the latter, you said so openly but as to the other, you only asserted under your breath. You approved of the sale of it entirely when you announced to the world that you were quitting politics. You were present at the discussion in Quebec; you voted against the amendment of the member for Kamouraska blaming the Government on account of the manner it had negotiated the sale, and you told anyone that chose to hear you what you thought of Mr. Beaubien's conduct in the matter. [Cheers.] You would have voted, you would even have spoken against your leader, Mr. Joly (he was not your leader at the time), as you did before on the question of the South Shore and tunnel and on the question of the salaries

of Ministers if you had been asked [Cheers.] You never had a word to say against the sale till the day when you saw your illusions as to entering the Quebec Cabinet disappearing. You were ready to approve of the whole policy and to defend it if Mr. Mousseau had invited you to form part of his Ministry. [Cheers.] Now that you are all in all with those whom you despised eighteen months ago, your gift of the gab is at their service in denouncing a policy which you then thought excellent. [Cheers.]

THE CHARGE AGAINST MR MOUSSEAU.

Seeing, moreover, that he could convince no one by the arguments which I have indicated, Mr. Mercier tries another plan. He seeks to prove that the Mousseau Government executed the contract with culpable lack of wisdom, and that they thereby enriched some of their friends at the expense of the country. That is really the only point in the whole question of the sale of the road that could be brought against the present Ministry, if the statements of Mr. Mercier and his new allies were true. Unfortunately for him, they are not true, as we will proceed to show. Mr. Mercier says:

"Mr. Chapleau transferred to Mr. Senecal and Company the balance of Quebec's million (\$600,000) and the value to the Quebec Government of the Court-house wharves plus the \$400,000 of debentures which the municipality had already given to the Government and to pay Mr. McGreevy. For this consideration the syndicate undertook the works that were to be done at Quebec and notably the displacement of the Prince Edward street road and the excavation of the so-called Princess Louise basin, and over and above the four millions of the price of sale he promised to pay an additional sum of \$500,000 at the time of the delivery of the roads. Now, by an agreement made between the Mousseau Ministry and the Syndicate on the 21st of August, 1882, two months after the handing over of the road, the latter is relieved from undertaking those works, and from the payment of the \$500,000. So that Mr. Mousseau, profiting by an unfortunate discretion, put the province to a loss of a considerable sum and the charge of costly works for which the contract had made the syndicate responsible. It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Mousseau had only to let the law take its course and we should have been relieved of immense works and have received \$500,000 over and above the price."

Just as many falsehoods in the above statement as there are lines. [Cheers]. Let us first clear ourselves of the most odious charge of having thus altered the contract in order to enrich our friends. In the first place, Mr. Mousseau never altered the con-

tract. All he did was to carry it out. [Cheers]. He had no discretion in the matter. The discretion had been left to the Quebec corporation, which was allowed to make, within three months, arrangements with the Government for the settlement of their difficulties. As to that balance of the million, the Court House property, and especially the position of the city as shareholder in the property of the road according to the rate of its subscription—this question was one of the gravest nature and had occupied the attention of the Government long before the contracts. The city of Quebec claimed that its subscription was null, and even demanded back the \$400,000 which had already been paid, and refused to pay interest on the \$250,00 which it had given to Mr. Joly's Government. The latter had agreed to have the works on St. Andre street done and to extend the road to the jetty of the new basin (not to "excavate the so-called Princess Louise basin," as the clever Mr. Mercier has it.) The Government had begun to get possession of the Court House, wharf grounds which they required for the railroad. There was there nearly \$600,000 worth of land, and, as Mr. Joly had paid \$1 a foot for the court house property where the station was, the Corporation asked the same price for the remainder. But it was the price at which Mr. Baillarge, the City Engineer, had valued it, and the city insisted on it. After a good deal of discussion, before the session of 1882, I ended by offering, in the name of the Government provided it were ratified by the Chamber, to remit to the city the balance of its subscription and to have the works, the displacement of the St. Edward street road effected, and the extension to the jetty to the new basins effected, if the city on its part would give us the court house grounds and give up its right as shareholder in the road. The Quebec journals of the time published those offers, which, however, the city refused to accept without modification. I threatened a lawsuit but it had no effect. I then told the Corporation that I would leave my offer open and that if the Government sold the road they would also sell their claims against the city, which would then have to contest the matter with the Syndicate before the courts of law. It was at my proposal that the Syndicate accepted this situation which was, indeed, advantageous

for them but which also freed us from the annoyance of a lawsuit against the Corporation and the complications that would ensue. The Syndicate gave \$500,000, it is true, but it received \$400,000 in Corporation bonds bearing 7 per cent. interest with the sinking fund. It executed works valued at \$200,000, but we were obliged to guarantee the legal validity of our titles and with those titles it also received \$600,000 worth of city debentures. The syndicate, it will be understood, could not assume at its own risk the application of the law of 1875, prepared by the DeBoucherville Government by its Attorney-General, Mr. Angers. That law was to the effect that, when the road was able to pay over and above the expenses of working, five per cent. on the \$3,000,000, the loan of which had been authorized by the commissioners in the said law, the balance over the five per cent. on the \$3,000,000 should be divided among the municipalities that held shares in the road. Now Montreal had paid in bonus and was no longer a shareholder, and the other municipalities had been virtually exempted from the payment of their subscriptions. And we sold the road for \$8,000,000 on which it was to be presumed that five per cent. at least would be realized above the expenses of working. The city of Quebec said; the five per cent. on the five millions beyond the \$3,000,000 of Commissioners, ought to be applied at least to the payment of interest on the debentures that will represent part or whole of our subscription. I look upon that pretention as extraordinary, but it was specious, and it was, perhaps, on account of that difficulty that the Hon. Mr. De Boucherville, when he was Prime Minister, expressed the opinion that it would be better to remit that subscription. Mr. Joly's Government had made a loan of \$3,000,000 without modifying the law of 1875, and we followed his example in our loan of 1880. My object was to arrive at some settlement, and that which I proposed seemed to me to be just, and no one objected to it except the corporation itself, and as for that body I elected that its opposition would give way in the face of a lawsuit with a company in whose case political influences could have no effect. And that is what really happened. Read the debates (which, by the way, are very incomplete) in the Hansard published by Mr. Desjardins, and you will see that Mr.

Joly thought the City of Quebec had been too rigorously dealt with, while Mr. Robertson claimed that that corporation had been treated too indulgently. The syndicate did not ask for the change, but, on the contrary, Mr. Senecal insisted on maintaining the clause by which he would have benefited, and I had to have it recorded in black and white that the 17th clause had been waived in order to prevent misunderstandings and opposition after the session. [Cheers.]

The Hon. Mr. Mousseau has only concluded the arrangement which I had offered to the city of Quebec, and which the Legislature would have left to its choice. I can well recall having often repeated before the House, while insisting on this point, 'well, since the city of Quebec had not accepted our offer, it did not deserve to be granted any more extended delay. The House imposed this condition on us, and, considering all the difficulties of the question, it was, after all, perhaps, the best course to adopt. There must be a lack of good faith with our opponents when they refuse to admit these indisputable facts. It is true that M. Mercier has his excuse all cut and dry to-day—he was so seldom present at the debates of the House that session! Very well, Mr. Mercier! If you cannot recollect your marked abstention in the discussion and voting on the sale of the railroad and cannot give good reason for your indifference on those occasions, it does not improve the matter to say—what is not the case! [Cheers.] Here, then, is the sum of the charges against Mr. Mousseau, which are made an excuse by certain false Conservatives to justify their separation from their party, and cast as an element of division among our friends. Mr. Beaubien knows better than anyone else how utterly frivolous these charges are. He saw the ground slipping away during the last session. Being unable to convince an intelligent Legislature, he sought to sow the seeds of defiance and jealous suspicion among the people. He knew he might produce some effect by provoking a demand for a general enquiry into the sale of the railway and into the accounts of every one who had anything to do with it. He knew that such an enquiry, made without any responsibility on the part of the accuser, is not in accordance with Parliamentary custom, and that no government could permit it, except on the condition of the accuser

accepting the full responsibility for his accusations. He counted upon their refusal to grant it for the purpose of dishonorably incriminating Ministers, and creating in the public mind the impression that there were revelations of dishonesty to be concealed. Every one knows that there is a class of men who get up accusations in secret, who invent news for the purpose of making mischief and putting money in their own pockets. Public men who respect themselves are wont to keep such gentry at a distance, not desiring to become the accomplices of their schemes, not wishing to become the tools of blackmailers. Individuals of the class in question dread the law courts and the well devised processes that justice employs for the protection of citizens against vexatious prosecutions. They know that their interested testimony would not be admitted in court and that besides being baffled and put to shame, they would have to submit to expenses which are always troublesome. They would, therefore, prefer to appear before a self-styled commission of enquiry to try and make good their pretended claims, or rather, in truth, to prevent them coming to light, by being paid for the scandal which they have devised. We have had such enquiries before the House. The experience of Mr. Prentice can hardly, I think, have escaped the memory of Mr. Beaubien. Even he who at the time lent an ear to that trickster had to blush at his proceedings, and the House—I can invoke the testimony of even my most violent antagonists—had only disdain and contempt for the accuser. There are still Prentices in the world; but what surprises me is that there are members who call themselves fair-minded and who, nevertheless, can stoop to the use of such instruments. Not thus we are going to preserve the honorable traditions of British parliamentary usage which require that the political accuser should bring an explicit charge and stake either his reputation before the tribunals or his seat in Parliament. If any one knows of what is deserving of blame, let him out with it at once. If he knows of acts that tarnish the character of Ministers, either those now in office or their predecessors, let him formulate his charges, let him state the sources of his information, let him name his witnesses, and if they have nothing to allege, let them hold their peace. Vexation at the loss of opportunities for

gain, jealousy of the success of others, the mean desire to rob one's neighbor of the good fortune which his talents may have won for him, these are not reasons which should induce a Legislature to make itself the echo of malevolent rumors and ridiculous stories. [Cheers.]

THE CHARACTER OF THE ACCUSATIONS.

As for you, Mr. Beaubien, everyone knows what you are. Strange it is that, unconsciously to himself, a sort of subtle *aura* is exhaled from the person that tells of what moral stuff a man is made. There is no need for conjecture; no need of inquiry; an instinct, which is infallible, tells us what he is. Even if you have not had close relations with a man, after we have been a few minutes in his company and seen him in his native guise, you can say with as much conviction as truth: "He is frank and honest, or he is dark and false; he is a man of large views or of limited horizon; he is generous or mean, real-hearted or jealous-minded. Oh, accusers, and I had almost said, oh ye envious-minded, you give forth your peculiar aroma; you reveal yourselves even under the mask of public interest, you would bring condemnation on men who are better than yourselves. Read over your speeches or your articles, put yourselves, if you can, in the place of listeners to yourselves, and you cannot but perceive that your first word, your first line, your first expression of the feeling, gives the dominant note of your soul. When you ask for information, not daring to accuse yourself, your first word is: "Ask those gentlemen who are in the enjoyment of from a million and a quarter to a million and a half expended in the finest property in province." There we have the men of figures! From a million and a quarter to a million and a half! How many *quinze sous* would that make? says Mr. Louis Beaubien. (Laughter and cheers). Read over your articles: "Those men who drive in carriages at our expense! Those men who wallow in luxury and in the enjoyments of millionaires—men who yesterday were not worth a cent and who to-day can purchase splendid properties and pay for them." Such is the style of writing that characterizes those accusers. One would think that they were groaning beneath the wounds inflicted by their own covetousness, by the reverses brought on by foolish speculations. Like Mr. Trudel,

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they would make fortunes by audacious ventures and risk therefor the futures of their families, the means of their kindred and neighbors and their personal credit. Then they have seen all their hopes foundered in a single day, and the debris of the wreck—have they seen it?—included portions of their conscience and honor. But no, they have not seen it. They have only retained the hatred which the gambler feels when, as he returned home with empty pockets, after having left his last sou on the gaming table. [Cheers.] Do you think there is much difference between the successful and the ruined gambler? If there is any fault, it is with one party as well as the other, with this difference, that the ruined gambler loses his money and keeps his spite, and that spite is the cousin of despair and the parent of dark counsels. Do you think that people are deceived by your diatribes? Do you not know that the public, who are good-natured and rejoice to see one of themselves making his fortune, are aware that it is through spite and envy that you speak as you do? But you reckoned that among the multitude, naturally well disposed, there would still be some who in secret cherished envious thoughts. The proneness to believe in evil rather than good, the unwholesome curiosity that is ever on the scent for scandals, are the results of crowds as well as of individuals. It is on this distempered condition of certain persons that you calculated to obtain dupes. But, after all, you will not succeed. (Cheers.) The people will understand, as the house understood, that the sacred domain of private life must be respected, and what is more, you will be unmasked. You will be asked, as I ask you to-day, what are the deeds of which you accuse your opponents, what are the offences that you lay to their charge, and, if you are not cowards and liars, you will at least declare (if you do not wish to reveal their names) that you have evidence and witnesses to establish your accusations. But you will not do that. You are afraid of what is clear; absurdity is your element and scandal your nourishment. You want something mysterious, something vague to excite and gratify that unwholesome curiosity of which I was just speaking, and of which you avail to make dupes and victims. (Cheers.)

THE QUESTION OF COALITION.

I cannot close, gentlemen, without saying

a word about this coalition about which the newspapers have told you so much during the last few months, this coalition which Mr. Trudel and his friends call a treason, "a shameful sale of the Conservative party for the benefit of liberalism." Once for all, and to put an end once for all to these malevolent statements, I declare to you that I have never desired a coalition. A coalition is a compromise between two political parties by which the respective programmes of those parties are modified for the purpose of adopting one programme acceptable to everybody. We had a notable example of this in the case of the programme of confederation. I urged union, conciliation; but coalition, never. (Cheers.) To those who desired that I should disappear, Mr. Joly consenting to disappear also, for the purpose of making a new party, I always replied that I had undertaken to govern the province with my programme, and that I had no intention of committing the task to others. I asked all men of good will to unite with me for the purpose of inaugurating a reign of union among us. This union, so necessary for us, a minority in the confederation, Sir George Cartier desired when he frankly offered an alliance to the leader of the Liberal party, Mr. Dorion; the Liberal party itself appreciated the necessity for it, when it made that effort, ill-considered and bungled, if you will, but at the same time most significant, to unite all political opinions in one great political party, which they pompously christened by the grand name "National"; this union I had hoped for, when after the violent contests of what may be called "the Letellier period," the people tired of these excited and violent struggles, sickened by the defeats and victories of the party, at the end of which it saw only impoverishment and ruin,—the people, I say, demanded with a loud voice, the reconciliation of its children, the union of all the active forces of the nation for a common work, the good of the province by the development of its material resources, and the enlargement of its political and moral influence in the confederation. (Cheers.) It was in response to this general sentiment that the Government of 1879, on the day following its foundation, threw out boldly at Lévis its programme for the approbation of the public opinion, its programme of "conciliation," of peace, of a return to serious business, and of tranquility and order." This programme, as unexpected

in its announcement as it was inwardly desired by the people, excited lively discussion. A few important Conservatives who had not been consulted in the selection of this programme accepted it with defiance and attributed it to weakness. These had been the most violent combatants, striking without mercy and without intermission. The battle had been violent, and, according to their view, victory should have been had without compromise, not even as to the choice of men. On the other hand, the vanquished of the day knew that the people whom they had galvanized during eighteen months with an exhausting labor had become tired of these ruinous contests. For the purpose of diverting public opinion they attempted to raise the clamor of ridicule. The repertoire of irony was exhausted; the epithets given to the new men who had joined the Conservative party, the shouts and laughter attempted at the reading of one of the articles of this programme, namely, the encouragement of one of the agricultural industries, that of butter and cheese, made the round of the press, of the hustings, and of the entire country. But a stronger clamor, one more frank and more true, also ran through the Province and completely covered the others. This was the popular acclaim by which the new programme was received. [Cheers.] Yes, I wanted union, I am not ashamed to avow it; and you, Mr. Mercier, ought to be proud also to declare that you, too, wanted it, instead of trying to defend yourself against the imputation of so noble a sentiment. Undoubtedly you are beginning to make me feel that you are not more sincere on this question than you have been on others. You need not attempt to quibble out of your position. Everyone knows that from 1879 you were ready to break away from your party; he who wrote the following lines in *La Concorde* was in your confidence. It is from that paper of the 27th December, 1882 :—

"It was soon after his arrival at Quebec that Mr. Mercier became a coalitionist. It was not as the *Progres de Valleyfield* said immediately after the defeat of Mr. Joly that it became a question of an alliance with the men of good will of the Conservative party. Mr. Mercier has stated since 1879 that it ought not to be forgotten that some ten Conservative counties had come to us by accident, and that at the next election these countries would abandon us. The late Mr. Letellier before, as well as afterwards, frequently confirmed the opinion of Mr. Mercier. 'Make a coalition,' said he,

'because Mr. Chapleau will make one, and you will lose power.' * * * *La Patrie*, with which we will deal further, only treats, as a rule as imbeciles, those who believe that there was any serious question of a coalition. It is quite certain that the 'bear' of *La Patrie* will never assist at meetings where the leaders of the party make propositions for a coalition."

Why, then, your quarrel with *La Patrie*, a quarrel which one day or another you will continue in *La Temps* which you have founded for the purpose of defending yourself against him who denounced from the first your projects of coalition with the Government. What was it that *La Patrie* said, when it drew you out in the following article of the 2nd January :—

"*La Concorde* evidently attacks Mr. Beaugrand personally for the purpose of reaching higher and striking those who, far or near, were opposed to this famous coalition that certain important personages had entered in the silence of the Cabinet. Mr. Beaugrand saw Mr. Mercier and asked him to be kind enough to read *La Concorde* and to state his opinion of the article entitled 'The Hon. Mr. Mercier and Coalition.' * * * The following day Mr. Mercier replied that he had read *La Concorde* of the 27th, and he approved of the article from the first to the last word in it. We have since learned that Mr. Mercier himself had corrected the manuscript of the article in question, and that it was impossible, therefore, to misunderstand his reply."

And of what coalition did *La Patrie* speak on the 4th of January, 1883, when it said to you :—

"Since the first project of coalition, Mr. Mercier ought to have seen that his schemes were not popular, and that he would not easily find in Montreal influential Liberals who would be ready to give the right hand of fellowship to Senecal, Chapleau and Mousseau, and to their friends. Mr. Mercier, we say, ought to understand that his plans were not popular. We could even use a more emphatic adjective, and still, in spite of this, he did not the less continue to have relations with certain Conservative leaders who played with him for the purpose of obtaining elections by acclamation in places where the Liberals should have made a fight. It is in this that we have found ourselves in complete disagreement with Mr. Mercier, and consequently we have refused to follow him."

Mr. Mercier, you say now that you were not properly understood; that you were always in accord with your friends, and that they ill-judged you; that you were for the coalition which *La Patrie* desired and not for the fusion which *La Patrie* denounced when it said with Mr. Thibaudeau "Mr. Chapleau wishes conciliation, but on condition that everyone accepts his opinion and follows him." You

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say, finally, Mr. Mercier, that you have never ceased to be faithful to your party leaders. You were not of that opinion when you stated in the House that you would not follow any line of conduct dictated by a political party; that you had imposed upon your electors the condition that you should be free in your actions and in your political sympathies. You have, unfortunately, a bad memory. In an interview with a reporter of the *Star* in October, 1881, did you not make this confession:—

"Is it true, Mr. Mercier," asked the reporter, "that you have abandoned the eminent position which you occupy in the ranks of the Liberal party on account of the conduct of your own friends?"

"There is some truth in that statement."
"They turned against you when you proposed to form a coalition, is it not true?"

"Yes, many among them."
"Is it on that account that you are retir-
ing?"

"That is one of the causes of my retirement. What is the use of working patriotically for one's country when one's party renders one's efforts useless."

Mr. David, the only really sincere man among you, translated your thoughts when he said in *La Tribune* of the 8th October, 1881:—

"Our conclusion is that all those who are in favor of a coalition must accept Mr. Chapéau as First Minister. Their efforts should be devoted to the work of surrounding him by strong men possessing the public confidence."

It is your friends, your newspapers, who thus excuse and accuse you. For myself, who know your opinion on the subject, I blame you for one thing—that is, not having to-day the frankness of your opinions at that time. Let us have no subterfuge, no quibbling; make the confession of your faith full and complete. Those who have blamed you, those who have accused you will pardon you the more readily if you will only be frank. Ah, gentlemen, if I did not know the wonderful versatility of Mr. Mercier's talents; if I had not seen him at my side fighting the Liberals to the death in 1862, and seen him afterwards constitute himself their most ardent defender; if I had not seen him afterwards coming back timidly to his first love, to return ad in to his vomiting imprecations against those who had had his first vows, I would be astonished to read, not only the declarations of others on his account, but as well the recital of his own movements since the day when power placed in his soul ambition without limits, and in his heart an ardent

thirst to possess it. At this moment his dream is not changed, and each irksome awakening has caused to revive more intensely and more vividly the desire to see the dream continued. [Cheers.] Yes, if I did not know to the very depths the Mercier of to-day as I knew the Mercier of the past, I would be astonished to see him defend the contradictions of his political career with a suppleness of argument that has only its equal in that of his own political conscience. But I know him; I can go farther and say I have always had for him a leaning because I was his first master. I know him and I am not astonished. I then take courage and despair not; I believe that he will yet return, and that his last loves will be those of his earlier days, so true is it that the first impression on a new vase rarely disappears and that "the first flame can never be extinguished," as they sing at the opera. But a truce to badinage; the fault of Mr. Mercier is that he had not the courage of his convictions; everyone would have applauded him if he had followed his own first movement. The fault of Mr. Trudel is that he desires to make impossible all idea of union between the public men of our Province. That is more than a fault; it is a crime, for where, indeed, will these violent dissensions bring us.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIVISION.

To what point are we drifting with these violent dissensions? What point is the destination of everything that is divided? Is it not ruin? Or, is it not, at least, insignificance. An eminent politician, an Italian Minister, wrote not long since that the great danger of constitutional governments among the Latin races was the crumbling away of opinions, the breaking up of parties. Every faction raises fresh difficulties, gives rise to new discussions. Time is lost in expedients to destroy a faction or to absorb its existence which must be maintained at any price, and as each party is too weak on account of its internal divisions, new compromises are necessary every day. Time passes, strength is lost in the effort to maintain equilibrium and the useful work of administration is nullified. That is just what is happening in Quebec. And yet how many important questions are pressing themselves on the attention of legislators and rulers! We have hardly any share in the immense movement which is going on to-day in

Europe and America. The Northwest is on the way to pass us by. Our old province has been mortgaged for the millions that are absorbed in the construction of the Pacific and westward immigration and we do not even think of profiting by that movement. Our agriculture is not making even a tenth part of the progress that it ought to make. The last census has left us behind the other provinces. Our forests are disappearing, and with them our natural wealth. Our mines continue hidden beneath the surface of the soil, and education is neglected and is too much dissociated from the material progress of the present. Colonization has a few heroic apostles amongst us, but that individual effort is not seconded as it ought to be. And, why is there this stagnation? Why this indifference? Why this division that is wasting our energies. We were already divided into two parties, and even that was too much, for it was too personal, too bitter. But now the Conservative party is divided against itself, while the Liberal party is almost as badly situated. Our British compatriots, not understanding these family quarrels, keep aloof from us, and at the present moment form almost a distinct party in our province. How, then, can you expect the Government, the Legislature, the press, to engage seriously in the elaboration of fruitful projects to develop our neglected resources. Why, we have hardly time to have our wounds dressed, our arms repaired, our ammunition renewed. As for the clergy, they, too, are the prey to profound dissensions.

THE PARAMOUNT DUTY OF THE HOUR.

What, then, is to be done? It is for all those who have any mission to instruct to give our position their serious reflection and to set to work without delay. No society can exist without submission to authority, without in part surrendering its will to that of the general public. It ought to be well understood that it is no mere question of taste, or of self-love—it is a question of duty, a question of sacrifice. It is necessary to have confidence in the powers that be, even if they are not all that we desire. Have not the Government satisfied the bishops on the question of education? Have they not begun a vigorous reform in the direction of the strictest economy? Let them, then, have

full opportunity to set in order our provincial finances, of which the equilibrium has been disturbed by judgments adverse to the Government's policy. Let them have the opportunity of making our provincial autonomy respected and if possible improved in the confederation to which we belong. These are some of the important tasks which claim every instant of the Cabinet's time and energy. French Canadians, look around you. Look at the other nationalities of the province. Do you not think that they, too, have differences among themselves? Only it is to be noted that they settle them quietly, and, no matter what is the regime under which they live, they know how to come to an understanding with it when their own interests are at stake. You also see them at the head of all our great industrial enterprises. My friend, do you not think that it is an anti-Canadian proceeding to attack one of our own people who has succeeded by energy and perseverance, as Mr. Senecal has been attacked, a man whose courage and enterprise have raised him to the position which he holds? Do you not think that he would be an aid and a support to your undertakings, if you allowed him to give you the benefit of his wonderful business talents and rare activity. Away then at once with those who cause dissensions amongst you, who would, if they could, ruin your best men. Away with those who are eaten up with envy and jealousy and allow those who have proved themselves to be men of business to labor for the prosperity of the country. (Cheers). Instead, then, of continuing these miserable dissensions, let us all unite under the same banner—the banner of our country. Let the priest teach submission to authority and set the example by his acts. Let our compatriots concentrate all their efforts towards the same end, so that our rulers, safe from those mean personal attacks, which are provoked on all sides, may be able to consecrate their time, their efforts, their intelligence, and their whole devotion to the assurance of prosperity to the people, protection and liberty to our institutions, and to our fine Province the high place which it ought to occupy in the Canadian Confederation.

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